

For Immediate Release

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## **STATEMENT REGARDING USS SAN JUAN AND MISSING SUBMARINE PROCEDURES**

NORFOLK, Va.— During the early evening of Tuesday, 13 March, units of the USS Enterprise Carrier Strike Group (CSG) received a series of indications that USS San Juan (SSN-751), a Los Angeles class submarine conducting pre-deployment training with the Enterprise CSG, was in distress. Fortunately, the submarine established communications in the early morning hours of 14 March, and indicated that there were no problems; hence, units were able to stand down from the search and rescue that was already well underway.

Losses of communications, followed by the reported sighting of a red flare, are distress indicators. These indicators, combined with establishing communications with only two of the three submarines operating with the Enterprise CSG, were sufficient information to activate missing submarine procedures.

Ships and aircraft from the Enterprise Strike group immediately commenced a search of the area where San Juan had been operating. Also, the International Submarine Escape and Rescue Liaison Office (ISMERLO) in Norfolk, Va., was alerted to assist with the search and rescue effort. ISMERLO, an international organization, serves to facilitate the rapid call out of international rescue systems in the event of a submarine accident. The immediate response from various international entities was superb. In addition, USS San Juan family members were notified of the situation at hand.

Although this was a false alarm, our primary concern was the safety of our Submariners and the support of family members. Our procedures demonstrated that the submarine escape and rescue program is able to quickly respond to an event such as this – when every second counts.

The Submarine Force is concerned about how this event initiated from what would appear to be false indicators. The Commander, Submarine Force will conduct a thorough review of the matter to determine any lessons learned.

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